

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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FM AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6826

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: MASS, HA
SUBJ: MUNITIONS EXPORT LICENSE REQUESTS

REF: STATE 252946

1. REFTEL REQUESTED ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON REQUESTS FOR TWO MUNITIONS CONTROL EXPORT LICENSES FOR HAITI.
2. GOH INFORMS EMBASSY THAT RECIPIENTS OF 500 .38 CALIBER SMITH AND WESSON REVOLVERS WOULD BE NON-COMMISSIONED OFFICERS OF THE REGULAR HAITIAN ARMED FORCES ASSIGNED TO POLICE BILLETS OUTSIDE PORT AU PRINCE. (IN HAITI, SINCE THE AMERICAN OCCUPATION, THE PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT HAS BEEN ASSUMED BY THE ARMY WHICH DETAILS OFFICERS AND MEN TO PERFORM THE POLICE FUNCTIONS IN THE CITY AND THE COUNTRYSIDE.) THE REVOLVERS WILL BE CARRIED BY THE NCOS IN PERFORMANCE OF THEIR REGULAR DUTIES.
3. RECIPIENTS OF 100 COLT LAWMAN .357 MAGNUM REVOLVERS WOULD BE OFFICERS OF THE PRESIDENTIAL GUARD WHOSE PRINCIPAL RESPONSIBILITY IS THE SECURITY OF THE CHIEF OF STATE. THE PRESIDENTIAL GUARD IS AN ELITE CORPS OF THE HAITIAN ARMED FORCES AND MOST OF ITS OFFICERS ARE GRADUATES OF THE HAITIAN

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MILITARY ACADEMY. THE REVOLVERS WILL BE CARRIED BY THE OFFICERS DETAILED TO GUARD THE PRESIDENT.

4. MILITARY UNITS REQUESTING WEAPONS ARE MEMBERS OF THE REGULAR ARMED FORCES AND ARE AMONG THE MOST RESPONSIBLE ELEMENTS OF THE HAITIAN SECURITY STRUCTURE. THEY ARE PROFESSIONAL UNITS UNDER PROFESSIONAL CONTROL AND HAVE NOT

BEEN USED IN SUPPORT OF PALACE POLITICAL MEASURES IN
DISTINCTION FROM LESS WELL-DISCIPLINED FORCES SUCH AS THE
PARAMILITARY VSN (VOLUNTEERS FOR NATIONAL SECURITY).

5. THE EMBASSY'S ASSESSMENT IS THAT SUPPLY OF THESE
WEAPONS WILL NOT SIGNIFICANTLY AFFECT THE POWER OF THE GOH
TO MAINTAIN INTERNAL CONTROL. THE RECEIPT UNITS ARE
PRESENTLY OPERATING WITH OLD, IMPROPERLY-SERVICED WEAPONS
AND REPLACEMENTS ARE NEEDED. GOH PURCHASES OF SMALL ARMS
FROM THE UNITED STATES WERE PRACTICALLY NIL DURING THE
SEMI-FREEZE IN OUR RELATIONS BETWEEN 1963 AND 1973.
THE FIRE IN THE PALACE ARMORY ON AUGUST 14, 1973, WHICH
DESTROYED MOST OF THE ARMY'S WEAPONS RESERVE, FURTHER
AGGRAVATED THE GRADUAL DETERIORATION OF THE PREVIOUS DECADE.
WEAPONS PURCHASES WERE RESUMED IN 1974 ON A SMALL SCALE.
THE RELATIVELY SMALL SIZE OF THE PROJECTED PURCHASE WOULD
NOT CONSTITUTE A SIGNIFICANT DIVERSION OF RESOURCES NEEDED
FOR DEVELOPMENT, NOR WOULD IT CONTRIBUTE TO AN ARMS RACE
IN THE REGION. MOREOVER, IN AREA OF HUMAN RIGHTS,
HAITI HAS MADE SIGNIFICANT STRIDES IN RECENT YEARS AND
MONTHS AND IT IS PLEDGED TO CONTINUED IMPROVEMENTS.

6. WE HAVE EXPLAINED IN DETAIL TO THE GOH THE LEGAL AND
POLICY CONSIDERATIONS THE U.S. MUST TAKE INTO ACCOUNT
IN REVIEWING MUNITIONS EXPORT LICENSE REQUESTS. IN VIEW
OF THE RECENT IMPROVEMENTS IN ITS HUMAN RIGHTS PERFORMANCE AND
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THE RESUMPTION OF PROFESSIONAL MILITARY CONTACT, THERE IS
A HIGH LEVEL OF EXPECTATION WITHIN THE GOH THAT THE
LICENSES IN QUESTION WILL BE APPROVED. DISAPPROVAL WOULD
CAUSE WIDESPREAD CONSTERNATION AND DISMAY COMING ON THE
HEELS OF OUR PRAISE FOR HAITI'S RECENT ACTIONS IN THE
HUMAN RIGHTS FIELD AND OUR ASSURANCES OF CONTINUED COOPERA-
TION AS LONG AS THE TREND CONTINUES. OUR RELATIONS WITH
THE RESPONSIBLE, PROFESSIONAL MILITARY WOULD BE WEAKENED.
THE GOH WOULD LIKELY FEEL IT HAD BEEN MISLED AS TO U.S.
POLICY (EVEN THOUGH NO ASSURANCES HAVE BEEN GIVEN) AND THE
REACTIONARIES WHO OPPOSE THE RECENT LIBERALIZATION MOVES
CERTAINLY WOULD BE STRENGTHENED. IN OTHER WORDS, A
NEGATIVE REPLY WOULD BE USED BY THE REACTIONARIES AS
EVIDENCE THAT THE U.S. WAS NOT SINCERE IN ITS STATEMENTS
OF APPROVAL OF RECENT HUMAN RIGHTS PROGRESS.

7. WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT GOH SHOULD RECEIVE ANY SPECIAL
CONSIDERATION. HOWEVER, ITS REQUEST SHOULD BE CONSIDERED
AS PART OF A CONSISTENT GLOBAL POLICY FOR PURCHASES OF
SMALL ARMS.
JONES

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